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Attorneys for Respondent,
Judge Arthur S. Block

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

BEFORE THE COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE

INQUIRY CONCERNING
JUDGE ARTHUR S. BLOCK,
NO. 167

ANSWER OF
JUDGE ARTHUR S. BLOCK

COMES NOW, Respondent, Judge Arthur S. Block, and answering the Notice of Formal Proceedings in the above-entitled inquiry, admits, denies and alleges as follows:

COUNT ONE

Respondent alleges as to each of the specific numbered allegations made:

A. Respondent admits that Deputy County Counsel Tanya Galvan appeared before him in a contested juvenile dependency case.

Respondent alleges that at a bench conference he wrote the word "relax" on her hand with a pen in an attempt at levity in order to calm Ms. Galvan down and encourage her to stop demeaning one of the attorneys who was present.

Respondent specifically denies that his alleged conduct intentionally violated the Code of Judicial Ethics, canons 1, 2A, 3B(4) and 3B(5), was willful misconduct in office, was conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice that brings the judicial office into disrepute, or was improper conduct within the meaning of the California Constitution, Article VI, section 18(d).

B. Respondent admits that he had a bench conference with Deputy County Counsel Tanya Galvan in February, 2001, while handling a juvenile dependency calendar.

Respondent specifically denies that, during this bench conference, he touched or attempted to fasten a button on Ms. Galvan's suit.

Respondent specifically denies that his alleged conduct intentionally violated the Code of Judicial Ethics, canons 1, 2A, 3B(4) and 3B(5), was willful misconduct in office, was conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice that brings the judicial office into disrepute, or was improper conduct within the meaning of the California Constitution, Article VI, section 18(d).

C. Respondent admits that on May 8, 2001, he presided over a contested juvenile dependency hearing where Deputy County Counsel Tanya Galvan represented the Department of Social Services.

Respondent admits that he kissed Ms. Galvan with her consent. All acts with Ms. Galvan were voluntary and with her consent.

Respondent specifically denies that he picked her up from her chair without her consent, and specifically denies that he held Ms. Galvan against her will while she tried to push respondent away.

Respondent specifically denies that Ms. Galvan attempted to avoid being kissed.

Respondent specifically denies that his alleged conduct intentionally violated the Code of Judicial Ethics, canons 1, 2A, 2B(1), 2B(2), 3B(4), 3B(5), 3E(1), and 3E(2), was willful misconduct in office, was conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice that brings the judicial office into disrepute, or was improper conduct within the meaning of the California Constitution, Article VI, section 18(d).

COUNT TWO

Respondent alleges as to each of the specific numbered allegations made:

A. Respondent alleges that in December, 2000, during a conversation with attorneys and court staff, it was suggested, as a joke, that the court hold court interpreter Marjorie Stafford in contempt for being late.

Respondent specifically denies that he told his bailiff that Ms. Stafford should be handcuffed when she arrived.

Respondent, on information and belief, alleges that Ms. Stafford willingly participated in her own handcuffing outside the courtroom doors.

Respondent specifically denies that his alleged conduct intentionally violated the Code of Judicial Ethics, canons 1, 2A, 3B(4) and 3B(5), was willful misconduct in office, was conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice that brings the judicial office into disrepute, or was improper conduct within the meaning of the California Constitution, Article VI, section 18(d).

B. Respondent admits making a statement directed to Deputy Public Defender Leonard Bank, "Now you know why we have interpreters."

Respondent specifically denies that, in making this statement, he ever pointed to, looked at, or made reference to Ms. Stafford's breasts, or any other part of her anatomy.

Respondent specifically denies that his alleged conduct intentionally violated the Code of Judicial Ethics, canons 1, 2, 2A, 3B(4) and 3B(5), was willful misconduct in office, was conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice that brings the judicial office into disrepute, or was improper conduct within the meaning of the California Constitution, Article VI, section 18(d).

COUNT THREE

Respondent alleges as to Count Three:

Respondent specifically denies that he threatened Ms. Stafford with banishment from his or any public courtroom.

Respondent further specifically denies that he improperly threatened retaliation for alleged complaints against respondent, potentially dissuading Ms. Stafford or others from making complaints against respondent.

Respondent specifically denies that his alleged conduct intentionally violated the Code of Judicial Ethics, canons 1, 2, 2A, 2B(1) and 2B(2), was willful misconduct in office, was conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice that brings the judicial office into disrepute, or was improper conduct within the meaning of the California Constitution, Article VI, section 18(d).

COUNT FOUR

Respondent alleges as to Count Four:

Respondent admits that in early March, 2001, Rabbi Denebeim contacted him regarding the way his daughter, Dina Denebeim, was treated by the judicial system at the Los Angeles Traffic Court.

Respondent admits that, following the conversation with Rabbi Denebeim, Rabbi Denebeim asked if Ms. Denebeim could describe to respondent her version of the events. Respondent allowed Ms. Denebeim to do so.

Ms. Denebeim related to respondent that, on January 7, 2001, she received a traffic citation for no California driver's license in possession (Vehicle Code section 12500(a)), and an inoperative tail light (Vehicle Code section 2452(a)). The ticket stated Ms. Denebeim should appear in court "on or before February 22, 2001."

On January 25, 2001, Ms. Denebeim received her California interim driver's license.

On February 13, 2001, Ms. Denebeim, who lives with her parents in Palm Springs, drove to Los Angeles and obtained a Certificate of Correction of the defective tail light.

As of February 13, 2001, both traffic violations cited to Ms. Denebeim on the ticket issued January 7, 2001, had been corrected.

Ms. Denebeim appeared in court as directed by the traffic citation on February 14, 2001, "on or before February 22, 2001." On February 14, 2001, Ms. Denebeim was given a notice to re-appear on March 2, 2001.

On March 2, 2001, when her case was not called Friday afternoon, Ms. Denebeim approached the court bailiff and told him she was an Orthodox Jew and, because of her religion, she cannot drive or operate a motor vehicle after sundown on Friday night, the Jewish Sabbath. The bailiff replied, "I don't care who you are. You'll be treated the same as everybody else."

Ms. Denebeim left the courtroom before her name or case was called. She was given a notice to re-appear on March 15, 2001, at the Los Angeles Airport Court.

Respondent called Supervising Judge Brandlin of the Airport Court, a judge who was not to hear Ms. Denebeim's matter. The purpose of respondent's telephone call was to inform Judge Brandlin about allegations of religious insensitivity and possible anti-Semitism toward Ms. Denebeim.

Respondent did not know that, through an apparent error, Ms. Denebeim's O.R. had been terminated and a bench warrant had issued for her alleged failure to appear

on February 22, 2001. In fact, Ms. Denebeim appeared on February 14, 2001, and was given a notice to re-appear on May 2, 2001. Respondent was not aware that a bench warrant for the arrest of Ms. Denebeim had been erroneously issued. Had respondent been aware that such bench warrant had issued, he would not have contacted the supervising judge regarding this matter.

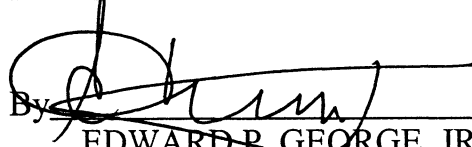
Respondent specifically denies that he was seeking special treatment or was engaged in improper ex parte contacts with Judge Brandlin, the supervising and site managing judge of the Airport Branch Court of the Los Angeles Superior Court.

Respondent specifically denies that his alleged conduct intentionally violated the Code of Judicial Ethics, canons 1, 2, 2A, and 3B(7), was willful misconduct in office, was conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice that brings the judicial office into disrepute, or was improper conduct within the meaning of the California Constitution, Article VI, section 18(d).

Respectfully submitted,

EDWARD P. GEORGE, JR.
TIMOTHY L. O'REILLY
EDWARD P. GEORGE, JR., INC.

JOHN E. FITZGERALD III
FITZGERALD & MULÉ

By 
EDWARD P. GEORGE, JR.
Attorneys for Respondent,
Judge Arthur S. Block

VERIFICATION

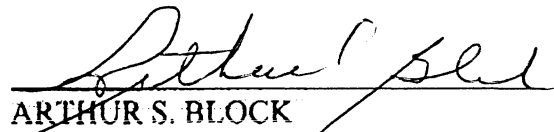
STATE OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES:

I, ARTHUR S. BLOCK, declare that:

I am the respondent judge in the above-entitled proceeding. I have read the foregoing Answer of Judge Arthur S. Block, and all facts alleged in the above document, not otherwise supported by citations to the record, exhibits, or other documents, are true of my own personal knowledge.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on June 24, 2002, at Palm Springs California.


ARTHUR S. BLOCK
Judge No. 167

PROOF OF SERVICE

State of California, County of Los Angeles:

I, Kay L. Marcum, declare that: I am and was at all times herein mentioned, a citizen of the United States; employed in the county aforesaid; over the age of 18 years; and not a party to the within action or proceeding. My business address is 5000 East Spring Street, Suite 430, Long Beach, California 90815.

The original **Answer of Judge Arthur S. Block** was served for filing with the Commission on Judicial Performance on July 1, 2002, by placing the original Answer in a sealed Federal Express envelope addressed to Jack Coyle, Esq., Office of Trial Counsel, Commission on Judicial Performance, 455 Golden Gate Avenue, Suite 14400, San Francisco, California; said envelope was deposited with the Federal Express office in Long Beach, California, on said date for delivery to the Commission on July 2, 2002.

A copy of the Answer of Judge Arthur S. Block was also served on Jack Coyle, Trial Counsel, Commission on Judicial Performance, by facsimile on July 1, 2002, at (415) 557-1165.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on July 1, 2002, at Long Beach, California.



KAY L. MARCUM